

An Investigation of the Relationship between Compulsory Citizenship Behavior and Psychological Withdrawal

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Abstract

This study used Lazarus and Folkman's stress and coping theory to develop and test a model of the way employees' cope with compulsory citizenship behavior at workplace. The model identifies psychological withdrawal as an emotion focused coping behavior. Factor analysis and linear regression were used to analyze the data collected from 368 clerical staff working in four large universities of Faisalabad, Pakistan. Analysis found that employees who experienced frequent compulsory citizenship behavior used psychological withdrawal to cope with it. This study contributes to the limited research on compulsory citizenship behavior at work. Recommendations for future research and implications are discussed.

Keywords: Compulsory citizenship behavior, psychological withdrawal, coping behavior

Introduction

Due to the growing economic global pressures on organizations, the probability of employees being asked to engage in works beyond their formal roles has increased (Ahmad, Eatough, & Ford, 2018, p.15). Employees often face strong demands from managers and coworkers to perform such duties that are not part of their job description. These demands are termed as compulsory citizenship behavior (Vigoda-Gadot, 2006). This behavior is quite prevalent within organizations (He, Peng, Zhao, & Estay, 2017; Spector, 2016, p.156), which has been empirically confirmed in Western (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007) and Chinese organizational culture (e.g., He et al., 2017; Zhao, Peng, Han, Sheard, & Hudson, 2013). Such empirical research suggests that employees who are victims of compulsory citizenship behavior show diverse negative attitudes and behaviors in shape of increased turnover intention, job stress, burnout, psychological strain, reduced job satisfaction, well being and withholding of future organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., Ahmadian, Sesen, & Soran, 2017; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007; Zhao, Peng, & Chen, 2014). To minimize these negative consequences, organizations need to be vigilant about compulsory citizenship behavior and avoid it as much as possible. Furthermore, organizations must take into account employee reactions to compulsory citizenship behavior whenever it happens, so that useful interventions and training programs could be designed.

Previous work on compulsory citizenship behavior suggests that it can serve as a special type of work stressor (He et al., 2017) in three ways (Ashkanasy, Bennett, & Martinko, 2016). First, if compulsory organizational citizenship tasks are added to the existing workload of employees without substituting it with their formal tasks, it creates burden on them. Second, compulsory citizenship behavior can be seen as unfair if it increases the existing workload. Lastly, compulsory citizenship behavior can take the form of illegitimate tasks which an employee believes should not be expected to do. But this newly defined stressor is having limited research (Ashkanasy et al., 2016, p.157) about its effects on employee attitudes and subsequent behaviors (Yam, Klotz, He, & Reynolds,

2014) e.g. coping behaviors like psychological withdrawal. Hence, it warrants further investigation into other cultures (e.g., Asian) and work settings (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). So to fill these research gaps, we focused on Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) stress-appraisal-strain-coping theory to establish the link between compulsory citizenship behavior and psychological withdrawal across clerical work context. This research may be helpful in advancement of transactional theory and also of practice in these areas.

Theoretical background and hypothesis

Vigoda-Gadot (2007, p.387) defined compulsory citizenship behavior in their seminal empirical work as “employees’ engagement in extra-role, but not necessary voluntary, behaviors that are conducted under duress and not as a result of the self-driven good will of the individual himself/herself”. Compulsory citizenship behavior includes extra-role favors that employees are forced by “significant others” (i.e., managers and coworkers) (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007, p.378) to give, even when they are not willing. Examples include facing pressure to assist a supervisor and other employees in addition to ones formal job duties unwillingly, feeling pressure to invest more effort in ones job than he/she wants to in addition to formal duties, facing social pressure from management to involuntarily work extra hours in performing extra-role duties without any formal reward etc. (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). Compulsory citizenship behavior represents the negative side of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) which is an individual’s discretionary extra-role behavior. It is also known as “good soldier syndrome” (Organ, 1988; Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983). However, it is performed *voluntarily* whereas compulsory citizenship behavior is performed *involuntarily*.

Compulsory citizenship behavior is both related and different from another similar construct i.e. citizenship pressure which is broader in concept and described as “a particular job demand in which an employee feels pressured to perform OCB” (Bolino, Turnley, Gilstrap, & Suazo, 2010, p.836). It is suggested that this feeling could arise from either internal (e.g., dispositional) or external (e.g., group norms, role perceptions, desire for advancement, organizational climate, management style, work habits of peers) forces (Bolino et al., 2010). E.g. in organizations that reward OCB in both formal and informal way, pressure is built upon employees to be supportive, to undertake extra responsibilities and carry on other types of OCB (Bolino et al., 2010). This is indirect pressure that employees feel without necessarily being forcefully asked to be “good soldiers”. Though, Bolino et al. (2010) has suggested desire for advancement to be an external force, we argue it to be an internal motivating factor (satisfier) based on Herzberg’s theory of motivation (1959). Those having this desire may internally feel pressurized to engage in OCB to be among “good soldiers”. On the other hand, in case of compulsory citizenship behavior, pressure always stems from the external forces such as management/boss/powerful seniors, coercing employees to involuntarily perform OCB. A Citizenship behavior does not qualify as a compulsory citizenship behavior if employees’ force themselves into it (He et al., 2017) because of intrinsic pressure. So compulsory citizenship behavior is narrower in concept to citizenship pressure and serves as its outcome (Liu, Zhao, & Sheard, 2017).

Scholars consider compulsory citizenship behavior as an unfair and exploiting treatment from “significant others” (Vigoda-Gadot, 2006). It is a hindrance stressor (He et al., 2017) that yields a variety of aversive consequences for both organizations and employees. For organizations, compulsory citizenship behavior incurs enormous unseen costs, and for employees, it results in several negative attitudes and behaviors. Compulsory citizenship behavior is, for example, negatively related to employees’ organizational Identification (Zhao et al., 2014), contextual performance and organizational commitment (Peng & Zhao, 2012), psychological safety (Zhao et al., 2013), innovation, job satisfaction, GOCB, and formal performance (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007) etc. It is positively

linked to job stress, organizational politics, intentions to leave, negligent behavior, burnout, job dissatisfaction (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007), work family conflict (Liu et al., 2017), future withholding of OCB (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007; Zhao et al., 2014), moral disengagement and employee silence as passive or avoidant coping behaviors (He et al., 2017).

Coping is defined as “constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141). This definition is accepted as the most comprehensive and precise (Parker & Endler, 1996; Zeidner & Saklofske, 1996). As per this definition, any type of behavior (e.g., withdrawal behavior) that is executed by an individual to handle demands of a stressor comes under the umbrella term of coping. Previous research has concluded withdrawal behaviors to be a form of emotion focused coping behavior (Mawritz, Dust, & Resick, 2014). Psychological withdrawal includes employee’s mental escape from work (Lehman & Simpson, 1992). For example, instead of spending time on work-related issues, employees’ spend it on personal matters; engage in excessive socialization to experience mental escape from stressful encounter, cyberloafing (Lehman et al., 1992) etc.

The current study intends to examine psychological withdrawal as a coping behavior in response to compulsory citizenship behavior for multiple reasons. First, conceptualizing compulsory citizenship behavior as a workplace stressor, we built and test our model via an overarching framework of transactional theory of stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This theory supports the likelihood that compulsory citizenship behavior might influence psychological withdrawal and offers a fertile theoretical ground for why we believe this. As per this theory, people engage in emotion focused and problem focused coping behaviors to deal with stressors. Problem focused coping is utilized when they view the stressor as controllable and Emotion focused coping is used when individuals view the stressor as less controllable (e.g., Austenfeld & Stanton, 2004; Welbourne & Sariol, 2016; Zakowski, Hall, Klein, & Baum, 2001).

Theories of social power uphold that certain individuals are bestowed with greater power by society in form of social expectations, norms, social and political coalitions, and access to resources (e.g., Carli, 1999; French & Raven, 1959). Powerful individuals (e.g., employers) may perceive the stressors to be more controllable and may engage in problem focused coping. Conversely, low power people (e.g., clerical employees) experience *learned helplessness* or hold the perception of lack of control over their environment. They are often powerless to change work climates (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009) and have apprehension of strong revenge from supervisors (Restubog, Scott, & Zagenczyk, 2011) in case of any retaliation. Thus, they need to depend on covert ordinary strategies (e.g., emotion focused) that are hidden from the powerful (Scott, 1985) to deal with a stressor. Since compulsory citizenship behavior is a stressor that is perceived to stem from coercion, unfair treatment, lack of appreciation, abusive supervision etc. (e.g., Vigoda-Gadot, 2006, 2007; Zhao et al., 2013), thus, it seems reasonable to include psychological withdrawal as a coping behavior for a target population of clerical staff working in lower position of hierarchy characterized by having low power. It is because execution of withdrawal as a coping strategy for perceived pressure (as is the case in compulsory citizenship behavior) is considered to be comparatively safe and indisputable (He et al., 2017). Psychological withdrawal as a covert coping behavior may allow employees to simultaneously take revenge from significant others without being noticed and venting of inner frustration as well. Thus, from above discussion we propose that

Hypothesis 1. *Compulsory citizenship behavior is positively associated with psychological withdrawal coping behavior.*

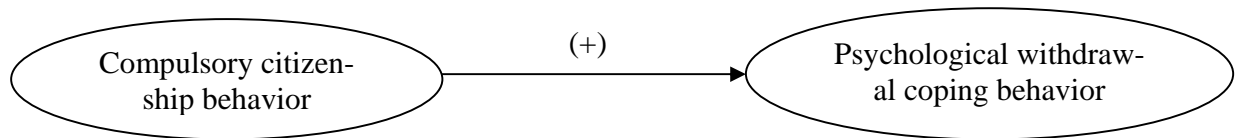


Figure 1. Proposed model

Methodology

Sample and Procedure

Data were collected from the clerical staff working in four large universities of Faisalabad, Pakistan. This population was selected because numerous studies have reported clerical work to be very stressful (e.g., Crompton, 2011; Peeters, Buunk, & Schaufel, 1995; Spector, 1987). A large amount of the literature about universities has marginalized the group of general staff (Szekeres, 2006), which includes clerical workers as well (Pick, Teo, & Yeung, 2012). Clerical workers characterized by work overload, powerlessness, lack of control, helplessness, hopelessness, frustration and oppression (e.g., Chi-Tsai & Hsing-Liu, 2012; Harkness, Long, Bermbach, Patterson, Jordan, & Kahn, 2005; Long, 1998; Narayanan, Menon, & Spector, 1999; Rodwell, Demir, & Flower, 2013), are thought to be more susceptible to coercive and exploiting treatment of “significant others” in form of compulsory citizenship behavior. Clerical staff includes, clerks, administrative assistants, personal assistants, secretaries, office assistants, receptionists (e.g., Schmied & Lawler, 1986; Spector, 1987; Ward & McMurray, 2011) etc. Teaching assistants were also included in the study because many of them were performing clerical tasks as well. We accessed participants through the personal contacts and then the voluntary individuals in each institute were handed over a questionnaire. A paper-and-pencil based survey was conducted. Respondents were informed of the purpose of survey through a cover letter that guaranteed complete confidentiality along with instructions to return the filled questionnaires in sealed envelopes provided to them. Specifically, respondents were provided with assurance that their immediate supervisors will not know their responses. Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson (2010) suggested that there should be a preference of 20 respondents per parameter/items regarding the sample size of a study. Since this study had 16 items, so a minimum of 320 respondents were required. Therefore, a final sample of 368 respondents for this study fulfilled this priori condition.

Out of 499 questionnaires distributed, a total of 385 were returned. This represented a response rate of approximately 77%. Eliminating incomplete data and outliers yielded a final sample of 368 useable surveys. This left us with approximately 74% useful response rate; 247 males, 121 females: $M_{age} = 30.52$ years, $SD = 3.96$, range = 23-46 years).

Measures

To reduce potential biases resulting from item priming effect, we used procedural remedy of reversing the measure order as suggested by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff (2003). First, we asked the items of psychological withdrawal (dependent variable), followed by employees’ rating of compulsory citizenship behavior and negative affectivity.

Psychological withdrawal: It was measured using eight-item scale developed by Lehman and Simpson (1992) and a single item (i.e., Showed effort to look busy even when not) adapted from HajiGhasemi & Hasanzadeh (2013) psychological withdrawal scale for teachers. This item was included as it is an important psychological withdrawal behavior frequently discussed in literature (Colquitt, LePine, & Wesson, 2011) along with other behaviors being measured in scale developed by Lehman and Simpson (1992). Since it is quiet easy for coworkers and managers to overlook many work withdrawal behaviors (Sackett & DeVore, 2001), thus, we used respondents’ self reports to measure this construct as is done in previous literature (e.g., Chi & Liang, 2013; Scott & Barnes,

2011; Wagstaff, Triana, Kim, & Al-Riyami, 2015; Wang & Huang, 2019). Respondents were requested to give the frequency with which they engaged in these thoughts or behaviors during the last two months (1= never, 5=many times). An exploratory factor analysis with promax rotation showed that the item “I left work station for unnecessary reasons” failed to load on intended factor due to low communality. Hence, it was excluded from further analysis. The remaining 8 items loaded on single factor with reliability of 0.89.

Compulsory Citizenship Behavior: Vigoda-Gadot's (2007) five-item scale was adopted to measure it. An example item is “the management in this organization put pressure on employees to engage in extra-role work activities beyond their formal job tasks”. Respondents were asked to report the frequency with which they experienced compulsory citizenship behavior at work during the last two months (1= never, 5=many times). The reliability of the scale was 0.88.

Control variables: We controlled for gender (1=Males, 2=Females) and age (years) due to their relevance to withdrawal behaviors (e.g., Mawritz et al., 2014; Volpone & Avery, 2013). We also controlled for dispositional negative affectivity. It is an individual's disposition to experience unpleasant emotional states (Watson & Clark, 1984). Previous research concluded that individuals high in negative affectivity preferred emotion-focused coping (Cosway, Endler, Sadler, & Deary, 2000; McWilliams, Cox, & Enns, 2003). So we decided to control for it in this research because the pure effect of compulsory citizenship behavior on psychological withdrawal can only be tested by holding other processes constant. In order to prevent respondents from being overburdened, we measured trait negative affectivity using three items previously used by Kim, H. Kim and Lee, (2015). These adjectives were originally adopted from PANAS scale developed by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988). Respondents indicated how they generally feel in terms of three negative adjectives by using a five-point likert scale (1= Never, 5= Always). The reliability was 0.69.

Data Analysis

Before testing the study hypothesis, the responses to survey items were assessed using maximum likelihood Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) through AMOS software package. We tested and compared a three-factor model with an alternative one-factor model in which all items were allowed to load on a single factor and a two-factor model in which items of compulsory citizenship behavior and negative affectivity were combined to load on single-factor. The latent variables were specified to correlate. The risk for common method bias was evaluated by comparing the three-factor model with a one-factor model and a model in which the items loaded simultaneously on their corresponding latent variables as well as on a common latent factor (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

To evaluate the model fits, Hair et al. (2010) suggested that multiple fit indices should be used. They recommended reporting a combination of at least one incremental index and one absolute index in addition to chi-square with related degrees of freedom. We followed the criteria recommended by Hu & Bentler, (1999). They suggested that to consider a model having good fit, it should be having a cutoff value close to .95 for both CFI & TLI, a cutoff value close to .08 and .06 for SRMR and RMSEA, respectively.

To assess the convergent and discriminant validity for the study constructs, we used Cronbach alpha ($\alpha \geq .7$) Composite Reliability (CR > 0.7), Average Variance Extracted (AVE > 0.5), Maximum Shared Variance (MSV < AVE), and square root of AVE greater than inter-construct correlations (Fornell-Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010).

To test the hypothesis, Pearson's bivariate correlation and linear regression were used. It allowed assessment of the relationship of compulsory citizenship behavior with psychological withdrawal.

Results

Preliminary Analysis

There were 10 questionnaires having more than 50% missing data. So they were removed from further analysis as recommended by Hair et al. (2010). To check the multivariate outliers, Mahalanobis distance $\chi^2(3) = 16.27$, $p < .001$ revealed seven outliers which were excluded from further analysis leaving us with a final sample of 368. To check the normality of the data, the univariate skewness and kurtosis values showed a range of .09 to -.685 and -.015 to -.937, respectively. These values were well below the suspicious values (i.e. ≥ 2.0 for skewness and ≥ 7.0 for kurtosis; Curran, West, & Finch, 1996).

Table 1. The results of Confirmatory factor analysis done on AMOS

	Model	Latent factors	$\chi^2(df)$	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	Model comparison
1	Measurement model	Compulsory citizenship behavior, Psychological withdrawal, Negative affectivity	183.04*** (101)	1.81	.97	.96	.047	.044	
2	One-factor model	General factor	1013.59*** (104)	9.75	.64	.58	.154	.128	2 versus 1
3	Two-factor model	Compulsory citizenship behavior combined with Negative affectivity, Psychological withdrawal	342.06*** (103)	3.32	.90	.89	.08	.071	3 versus 1
4	Measurement model with common method factor	Compulsory citizenship behavior, Psychological withdrawal, Negative affectivity, CLF	110.19*** (85)	1.30	.99	.99	.03	.03	4 versus 1

Note. CLF = Common Latent Factor, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Measurement model

The results of Confirmatory factor analysis done on AMOS are summarized in Table 1. The model that included three latent constructs (i.e., compulsory citizenship behavior, psychological withdrawal, and negative affectivity) showed a good fit to the data, ($\chi^2(101) = 183.04$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 1.81$, CFI = .97, TLI = .96, SRMR = .044, RMSEA = .047) (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The items loaded significantly on their corresponding latent constructs ($M_{\text{standardized loadings}} = .72$; Range $_{\text{standardized loadings}} [.63; .82]$). Three factor model revealed a better fit to the data in comparison with the alternative models that we investigated including (a) a one factor model, $\chi^2(104) = 1013.59$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 9.75$, CFI = .64, TLI = .58, SRMR = .128, RMSEA = .154; and (b) a two-factor model in which compulsory citizenship behavior and negative affectivity were combined to load on single factor, $\chi^2(103) = 342.06$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 3.32$, CFI = .90, TLI = .89, SRMR = .07, RMSEA = .08. Furthermore, to evaluate the risk of common method bias (CMV) due to collection of data from a single source, we compared the three-factor model with a one factor model and another model in

which all items were allowed to load on their corresponding latent factors, as well as on a common latent factor (CLF) (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The comparison indicated that the three factor model fitted the data better than the one factor model (see Table 1). Besides that the common method factor explained only 4% of the variance which is well below the threshold of 25% recommended by Williams, Cote, and Buckley (1989). Additionally, the Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI) was greater for the three-factor model (PNFI = .78) than the common factor model (PNFI = .68). Thus, we conducted further analysis with the three-factor model.

Descriptive statistics and hypotheses testing

Table 2 summarizes the means, standard deviations, cronbach alphas, composite reliability, average variance extracted and correlations for all the study variables. The reliability and validity of the constructs were good since values of both cronbach alpha and composite reliability exceeded an acceptable level of 0.60 and 0.70 respectively (Hair et al., 2010, p. 125). Moreover, the composite reliability and AVE of all were greater than the recommended values of 0.70 and 0.50 respectively (cf. Hair et al., 2010) except for negative affectivity that had AVE 0.44. But it was acceptable since its CR was equal to 0.70 as suggested by Fornell & Larcker, (1981). Thus, the convergent validity of variables was established. A more conservative criterion suggested by Fornell-Larcker (1981) was used to establish discriminant validity. It compared the square root of AVE against inter-construct correlations. The discriminant validity was established because the square root of AVE for all the measures was higher than their correlations with other constructs as reported in Table 2.

Table 2 Means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlations (N = 368)

		M	SD	α	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5
1	Gender	1.33	0.47	na	na	na	-----				
2	Age	30.53	3.95	na	na	na	-.08	-----			
3	Naf	3.27	0.89	0.69	0.70	0.44	.02	.02	(0.66)		
4	CCB	3.30	0.87	0.88	0.88	0.60	-.02	-.03	.26**	(0.77)	
5	PWd	3.37	0.79	0.89	0.89	0.50	.11*	-.15**	.20**	.41**	(0.71)

Notes: na = not applicable. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. CR=Composite Reliability; AVE=Average Variance Extracted. Diagonal represents the square root of AVE; while below the diagonal the estimated correlations are represented.

Correlations among study variables showed that as expected, compulsory citizenship behavior was positively related with psychological withdrawal ($r = .41$, $p < .01$). These results provided preliminary evidence for hypothesis 1.

Table 3 summarizes the results of linear regression without covariates. The results revealed that compulsory citizenship behavior explained 16% of the variance in psychological withdrawal, $F(1, 366) = 71.90$, $p < .001$. These results largely supported hypothesis 1 by confirming that compulsory citizenship behavior positively relates to psychological withdrawal ($b=0.37$, $SE=0.04$, $p < .001$). The hypothesis 1 results are depicted in Fig.1.

Table 3. Result of regression analysis (without covariates) predicting psychological withdrawal

Dependent variable: Psychological Withdrawal coping behavior					
Variable	b	SE	p value	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Compulsory citizenship behavior	.37	.04	.000		
Overall model				.16***	.16***

*** $p < .001$

We further rerun the analysis with relevant control variables to rule out potential alternative explanations for the previous results. The pattern of results remained identical to the model without control variables. Thus, for parsimony and ease of comparison with other studies, we reported the results in table 3 without control.

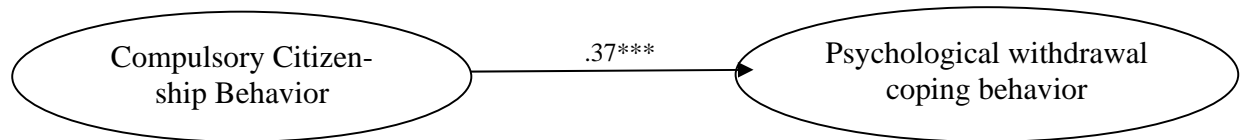


Figure 2. Results of hypothesized research model

Discussion

The current study contributes to the understanding of compulsory citizenship behavior by demonstrating the way employees cope with this newly defined stressor in research. The purpose of the current study was to probe the association and impact of compulsory citizenship behavior on psychological withdrawal for the first time in clerical work context. The results provided evidence that psychological withdrawal is an emotion focused coping behavior that has positive relationship with compulsory citizenship behavior.

Theoretical Implications

The present study has numerous theoretical implications. First, the findings add to the transactional theory of stress by providing a nuanced understanding of the way employees cope with compulsory citizenship behavior stressor that is having limited research (Spector, 2016). Previously very few studies have explored the coping behaviors employees adopt in reaction to compulsory citizenship behavior (e.g., He et al., 2017; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007; Zhao et al., 2014). However, the association between compulsory citizenship behavior and psychological withdrawal as an emotion focused coping behavior has not been established yet. Thus, by empirically linking compulsory citizenship behavior to psychological withdrawal, we have responded to the call of Vigoda-Gadot (2007) to shed more light on this stressor. Our result sits nicely with previous findings where compulsory citizenship behavior was positively related to a type of emotion focused coping behavior (He et al., 2017). Our results are also supported by previous work where hindrance stressors showed positive impact on psychological withdrawal (Mawritz et al., 2014). This study has also extended the existing body of psychological withdrawal literature by investigating compulsory citizenship behavior as its new precursor. Second, to our knowledge, it is the first research to examine compulsory citizenship behavior work stressor in an understudied population (i.e., clerical workers) within the domain of literature about university staff. Thus, we have also responded to the call for studying this stressor in other work settings (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007).

Practical implications

The current study has some significant practical implications. Our finding that compulsory citizenship behavior enables employees to adopt psychological withdrawal should be taken by organizations as a significant warning to understand the double-edged sword impact of compulsory citizenship behavior (Bolino, Hsiung, Harvey, LePine, 2015). Management should undertake precautionary procedures and design a zero-tolerance policy regarding compulsory citizenship behavior. Specifically recognizing that victims of compulsory citizenship behavior are more likely to use psychological withdrawal coping behaviors, organizations must have an employee grievance system (Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2004), where employees could launch complaints against coercive treatment (e.g., compulsory citizenship behavior) from powerful personnel at work rather than

adopting withdrawal coping strategies that are costly for organizations (Berry, Lelchhook, & Clark, 2012). This should be complemented with protective policies to save employees from receiving retaliatory treatment from significant others after speaking up against compulsory citizenship behavior. Additionally, organizations should design interventions & training programs to help employees in learning effective strategies that they could use in situation of compulsory citizenship behavior rather than using maladaptive strategies.

Limitations and future research

The present study has some limitations that should be recognized. First limitation is that we relied on self-report measurement of all variables. This may have increased the common-method bias by inflating the relations (Conway & Lance, 2010). Future research on relevant topics might rely on a multi-source research design and capture employee psychological withdrawal by using supervisor-rated and/or coworkers-rated employee psychological withdrawal behaviors. A second limitation is the cross-sectional design of the study. Thus, the current model should be re-examined longitudinally by future researchers. A third limitation concerns the generalization of the study due to the data collected from only clerical workers. Future research should focus on employees of other levels and occupations as well to provide additional support for the generalizability of our results. Finally, psychological withdrawal as an emotion focused coping behavior was the outcome of this study. Future studies could explore other emotion focused, problem focused, approach and avoidance focused coping behaviors. Future researchers should also attempt to investigate the underlying mechanism between these study constructs.

Conclusion

The current study adds to the Transactional theory of stress by elucidating the behaviors that employees adopt to cope with compulsory citizenship behavior work stressor. It provides initial support of the positive link between compulsory citizenship behavior and psychological withdrawal as an emotion focused coping behavior, thus providing us a glimpse of what coping strategies employees adopt when they don't want to be "good soldiers".

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